

January 2017

Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



Senior Bullying

A bully by definition is a quarrelsome, overbearing person who habitually badgers and intimidates smaller or weaker people. Bullying is an aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated, and ongoing.

Most people associate bullies and bullying behavior with children, but it encompasses all ages. In 2010, 1 in 5 senior citizens reported being bullied by other senior citizens. This statistic is staggering, but not one that is common knowledge amongst senior citizens or the general public.

Bullying can occur anywhere including senior housing, senior citizen centers, assisted living, nursing homes, and in other locations where seniors are spending a lot of time together.

The most common form of adult bullying is verbal bullying. It involves rumors, name calling, teasing, sarcastic or demeaning language, intimidation and humiliation. However, it can escalate over time to physical bullying which involves physically harming someone, threatening physical harm or physical domination.

It's important that action is taken to prevent bullying from occurring and to appropriately



address bullying when it occurs in these settings so that senior citizens are protected.

For Victims:

- Ignore the bully, walk away
- Take a stand (depending upon your comfort level)
- Seek support from your friends, family, and Senior Citizens Center Director/Staff
- Provide notification to the Senior Citizens Center Director/Staff of the bullying
- Document instances of bullying so that legal action can be taken, if necessary
- Realize that the bully could be anyone-family member, staff member, neighbor, senior citizen, etc.

For Bystanders:

- Do not be afraid, to take a stand for the victim and offer their support as well.
- Notify the Senior Citizens Center Director/Staff of the bullying.

Senior bullying is not something new – it's been going on for years, but it's not been addressed or labeled as bullying. It's been allowed to go on and often times not addressed at all. It's important that it gets the attention it deserves and now requires. Individuals need to be educated and empowered to recognize senior bullying and to take a stand against it.

**References:**

For additional information please contact Amanda Stokes, Pennyrile Area Agency on Aging & Independent Living, at 1-800-928-7233 or by email at amanda.stokes@ky.gov.

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